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OCTOBER 6, 1917.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. BARNHART, from the special committee on investigation of charges made by Hon. J. Thomas Hefflin, submitted the following

REPORT.

Your committee, appointed to inquire into the allegations and charges made by J. Thomas Hefflin, Member of Congress from the fifth district of Alabama, on the floor of the House on September 21, 1917, and also to inquire into the allegations or charges made in an alleged interview or statement alleged to have been furnished by the said J. Thomas Hefflin and printed in the Washington Post of September 22, 1917, respectfully ask leave to report as follows:

The investigation made by the committee has necessarily been hurried, due to the fact that the resolution authorizing the appointment of your committee to make the investigation was introduced early in the afternoon of Thursday, October 4, 1917. Afterwards, on the same afternoon, a resolution was passed by the House fixing the hour of adjournment at 3 o'clock on the following Saturday.

The resolution authorizing the appointment of the committee and vesting them with authority is as follows:

*Be it resolved*, That the Speaker of the House of Representatives is hereby authorized and empowered to appoint a select committee of five Members of the House who shall make inquiry into the allegations and charges made by J. Thomas Hefflin, a Member of Congress from the fifth district of Alabama, on the floor of the House on September 21, 1917, which is in part as follows:

"I do not know what Members of Congress, if any, have been influenced by this mysterious German organization. If I were permitted to express my opinion, I could name 13 or 14 men in the two bodies who, in my judgment, have acted in a suspicious manner by the introduction of resolutions or bills or by speeches in the Congress or out of it that lead to the conviction that they are not loyal to this Government in the hour of its peril. They ought to be investigated, and if found guilty, they ought to be expelled from the House and the Senate of the United States."

Also into the allegations and charges made in an interview or statement alleged to have been furnished by the said J. Thomas Hefflin and printed in the Washington Post of September 21, 1917, as follows:

"I have heard a story that there is a gambling room in Washington where pro-German and peace-at-any-price Members of Congress get their pay by being extraordinarily lucky at cards. I demand that this matter be investigated and that the

in Congress in disgrace. I believe that some of these members of the Congress. I know I could name 13 or 14 late who have acted in a very suspicious manner." to the House before the adjournment of this session inquiry and its recommendation as to the action which touching any person or persons involved in or affected its and charges.

instruction, on the afternoon of October 4 the preliminary meeting to determine the scope of the meeting was continued to the morning of October 5. deliberation your committee determined that the main admitted for its investigation was whether the charges. Heflin in his speech or alleged interview against Congress involved the imputation of corrupt motives or the them of any portion of the alleged German corruption and. For this reason your committee invited Mr. Heflin to appear and he was closely questioned as to the meaning he conveyed or intended to convey by these charges. In the first place, he was questioned as to the accuracy of his reported interview in which it was specifically charged that Members of Congress had participated in gambling as a result of which they received money from the German Government, or acted in a suspicious manner in that connection.

Mr. Heflin emphatically denied that he had made such a statement and asserted that he had never, at any time or place, publicly or privately, made any charge that any Member of Congress had been influenced in any vote or action by the receipt directly or indirectly of any part of this or any other fund. He stated that he did not charge this, and did not intend to charge this, either in his speech on the floor of the House of September 21 or in any statement which he made to newspaper men which was alleged to have been reported in the Washington Post. With respect to the newspaper interview, however, Mr. Stuart Godwin, Washington representative of the International News Service, and Mr. Andrew Eldred, Washington representative of the United Press, appeared, at their own suggestion and declared to your committee that Mr. Heflin had been correctly quoted, as they both heard his statement and reported it for publication.

After being questioned as to whether he had any proof of corruption, by money, of Members of Congress, Mr. Heflin most emphatically stated that he did not have any proofs of the receipt of money by Members of Congress and that he was unable to furnish or procure any such proofs.

On September 28, 1917, Frank L. Polk, Acting Secretary of State, wrote to Hon. Edward W. Pou, a member of the House from North Carolina, as follows:

MY DEAR MR. POUL: In response to your inquiry over the telephone to-day, addressed to the department, I beg to inform you that the State Department has no evidence that could in any way connect a Member of Congress with the payment of money by the German embassy in its propaganda activities.

I take the liberty of quoting a statement issued by the Secretary of State on September 22, which indicates his opinion on this subject:

"If there is any misunderstanding, I wish to say very emphatically I do not see how the Bernstorff message in any way reflects upon Congress or any Member. Apparently it was the purpose to employ agencies to influence them of which they would have no

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knowledge and in case they were influenced to know what the organization was. This exposé is propaganda and there is no intention of casting.

Believe me, my dear Mr. Pou.

Yours, very truly,

On the above statements of Mr. Heflin, taken from the letter from the Secretary of State's office, you will see the opinion that there is no justification for and no basis upon which to base a further investigation of the question of receipt of money by Members of Congress.

This question being disposed of, nothing remains for your committee to investigate but Mr. Heflin's charges that he and other Members of Congress have acted in a suspicious manner in the introduction of bills or resolutions, or in speeches made in Congress or out of it.

It is apparent that such an investigation would necessarily consume a great deal of time and involve considerable expense, no provision for which has been made in the resolution under which your committee is acting. Therefore, it is apparent that it is utterly impossible for your committee to make a full and fair investigation of this phase of the question within the time limit.

While your committee makes no recommendation in the premises, we beg to state it as our opinion that in so far as Mr. Heflin's charges impute or might fairly be construed as imputing dishonest or corrupt motives to any Member of Congress, notwithstanding the fact that he now denies any intention of conveying any such imputation, his conduct in that respect is subject to criticism.

But inasmuch as the serious question of disloyalty to our country on the part of some Members of the House has been raised by Mr. Heflin, in the opinion of your committee, the direct and parliamentary course of action would be in the institution by him of proceedings for expulsion from Congress of those whose loyalty he challenges.

Respectfully submitted.

HENRY A. BARNHART.  
W. W. VENABLE.  
ARTHUR G. DEWALT.  
NICHOLAS LONGWORTH.  
JOSEPH WALSH.

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